



The Sixty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,666th Concert

Parisii Quartet

Arnaud Vallin and Jean-Michel Berrette, *violin*

Dominique Lobet, *viola*

Jean-Philippe Martignoni, *cello*

With

Jérôme Corréas, *baritone*

Emmanuel Strosser, *pianist*

March 16, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Presented in honor of the exhibition
In the Forest of Fontainebleau:
Painters and Photographers from Corot to Monet

Program

Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983)

String Quartet (1917–1919)

Modéré

Intermède

Final

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée

Chanson romanesque

Chanson épique

Chanson à boire

Reynaldo Hahn (1875–1947)

Quintet in F-sharp Minor for Piano and Strings

Molto agitato e con fuoco

Andante (non troppo lento)

Allegretto grazioso

INTERMISSION

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

La Bonne chanson

For baritone, piano, and string quartet

Une sainte en son auréole

Puisque l'aube grandit

La lune blanche luit dans les bois

J'allais par des chemins perfides

J'ai presque peur, en vérité

Avant que tu ne t'en ailles

Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été

N'est-ce pas?

L'hiver a cessé

The Musicians

Formed in 1984 by four prize-winning graduates of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris, the Parisii Quartet won early acclaim with its triumphs at three major international competitions: Banff (1986), Munich (1987), and Evian (1987). Invitations followed from the major concert halls and festivals of Europe, and the Parisii has since toured regularly throughout Europe and the United Kingdom. Highlights of the Quartet's recent European seasons include concerts in Barcelona, Edinburgh, Lausanne, Madrid, Moscow, and Saint Petersburg. Much in demand in Paris, the ensemble has been featured at the Opéra de la Bastille in a presentation of all the quartets by Haydn. It has also performed all of the Beethoven string quartets at the Salle Gaveau, and it has appeared frequently at the Musée d'Orsay.

Noted for its performances of distinctive and unusual repertoire from the eighteenth through the twenty-first centuries, the Parisii has distinguished itself with award-winning recordings of intriguing works by French composers Reynaldo Hahn, Gabriel Pierné, and Germaine Tailleferre, as well as the complete works for string quartet by Anton Webern. The ensemble has recently completed a recording of the sixteen string quartets of Darius Milhaud, which won the Grand Prix Charles Cros, and made the premiere recording of *Le Livre pour quatuor* by Pierre Boulez.

Jérôme Corréas has established a reputation as one of the finest French bass-baritones, with wide-ranging musical abilities and interests. He has had major roles in operas of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, including Handel's *Admetto* with the Montpellier and Sydney Operas, Dallapiccola's *Volo di Notte* in Paris, Rameau's *Zoroastre* in Brussels, Lyon, and New York, and Verdi's *La Traviata* in Toulouse. He has toured throughout France and in Australia, China, South America, and the United States in collaborations with noted conductor William Christie, winning widespread acclaim for his performances in works by Handel, Marais, Lalande, Rameau, and others. He performs frequently in concert halls and at festivals in the great choral works of Bach, Beethoven, Charpentier, Couperin, Fauré, Handel, and Rameau.

Pianist Emmanuel Strosser began his musical studies at the age of six with Hélène Boschi in his native town of Strasbourg, France. He later enrolled in the Paris Conservatoire and studied piano with Jean-Claude Pennetier and chamber music with Christian Ivaldi. After being unanimously awarded the first prizes in both these disciplines he completed his training under Dimitri Bashkirov, Leon Fleischer, and Maria João Pires. Laureate of the International Chamber Music Competition of Florence, he was a finalist in the Clara Haskil Competition in 1991. An assistant to Alain Planés at the Paris Conservatoire, Strosser appears regularly as a soloist in recitals and with many French orchestras (notably the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France) as well as with European orchestras in Spain, including those in Barcelona and Bilbao; Italy; and in the North of Europe. Strosser can be heard in several recordings, among them works by Gabriel Fauré for Assai, and Mozart piano solo pieces for Harmonia Mundi.

The Parisii Quartet, Jérôme Corréas, and Emmanuel Strosser appear at the National Gallery by arrangement with Melvin Kaplan, Inc., of Burlington, Vermont.

Program Notes

Germaine Tailleferre was born Marcelle Taillefesse at Saint Maur Des Fossés, Île-de-France. As a young woman, she changed her last name to Tailleferre to spite her father who had refused to support her musical studies. She studied piano with her mother at home, composed short works of her own, and subsequently enrolled in the Conservatory in Paris, where she met Georges Auric, Arthur Honegger, and Darius Milhaud. At the Paris Conservatory she won first prize in several categories and wrote the eighteen short works in the *Petit livre de harpe de Madame Tardieu* for Caroline Tardieu, the Conservatory's assistant professor of harp. Tailleferre associated with the artists of Montmartre and Montparnasse, including the sculptor Emmanuel Centore, who would eventually marry her sister Jeanne. It was in the Montparnasse atelier of one of her painter friends where the initial idea for the cooperative among six composers, "Les Six," began. The publication of Jean Cocteau's manifesto *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* resulted in Henri Collet's media articles that led to instant fame for the group. Tailleferre was the only female member of Les Six. Tailleferre's quartet is an early work, from the same period as *Jeux de plein air* for two pianos. *Modéré* and *Intermède* were written first (in November and December 1917) and were performed separately until the *Final* was added to them in October 1919. The quartet received its first performance at the Concerts Delgrange in 1920. It is dedicated to Arthur Rubinstein.

Maurice Ravel was born in Ciboure, France, near Biarritz, part of the French Basque region that borders on Spain. His mother, Marie Delouart, was Basque, and his father, Joseph Ravel, was a Swiss inventor and industrialist. At age seven, Ravel began piano lessons and composed pieces by age twelve. His parents encouraged his musical pursuits and sent him to the Conservatoire de Paris, first as a preparatory student and eventually as a piano major. During his schooling in Paris, Ravel joined with a number of innovative young artists who referred to themselves as the "Apaches" ("hooligans") because of their wild abandon. The group was well known for its drunken revelry.

Ravel studied music at the Conservatoire under Gabriel Fauré. During his years at the conservatory, he tried numerous times to win the prestigious Prix de Rome, but to no avail. After a scandal involving his loss of the prize in 1905 (to Victor Gallois), even though he was considered the favorite to win that year, Ravel left the conservatory. The incident—named the Ravel Affair by the Parisian press—also led to the resignation of the Conservatoire's director, Théodore Dubois.

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée is a set of three songs by Ravel that are set to texts by Paul Morand (1888–1976). This was Ravel's last completed work. It had been commissioned for a film by G.W. Pabst, starring Chaliapine, but the slowness of Ravel's composing meant that the songs were not used, and Jacques Ibert provided some songs instead. The first performance was given by Martial Singher with the Colonne Orchestra on December 1, 1934.

Half a century after his death, only a handful of Reynaldo Hahn's compositions are still regularly performed: *Ciboulette* (rightly considered as a refined operetta) and a number of songs (regarded by singers as being among the very finest, and on a par with those of Debussy and Fauré). Hahn's symphonic works, piano pieces, chamber music, operas, and most of his operettas still await revival. Even during his lifetime, Hahn's name appeared only rarely in the writings of other musicians. He is absent from Debussy's critical articles, the writings of Ravel, Poulenc's correspondence, and Milhaud's memoirs, as if his life were spent "out of the picture." One only has to read Hahn's own writings to realize that his life did indeed revolve around other circles. His perception of the world and of art included not only music, but also travel, landscapes, painting, and literature, and his friends came from the world of letters and the theatre and included Marcel Proust and Sarah Bernhardt. Hahn's actual conception of music was totally personal, bringing together Mozart and Chabrier, Saint-Saëns and the

chansonniers of the *belle époque*. This singularity (which has all too often been passed off as a subtle ‘worldliness’) no doubt explains not only why Hahn’s oeuvre has for the most part fallen into oblivion, but also the amazing response that these works enjoy when they are revived. For Reynaldo Hahn was by no means a second-rate musician, overshadowed by his contemporaries; he was an extraordinary artist who, in the Paris of 1900, developed his own, absolutely personal world.

Chamber music takes up a relatively large portion of Hahn’s catalogue of works. The *Piano Quintet* was, with the *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, the most frequently performed of his chamber works during his own lifetime. French musicians of the last years of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century were fond of works for piano and strings. The result was a bumper crop of piano trios, piano quartets, and piano quintets, signed by such names as Fauré, Franck, Pierné, Saint-Saëns, Vierne, and Widor. This contribution by Hahn, composed in 1921 and first performed the following year in Paris at the Salle Gaveau by the pianist Marguerite Vaudilliers and the Gaston Poulet Quartet, clearly fits in with that context, with its musical coloring often evocative of Fauré, its full harmonies, and its insinuating melodic motifs. Instead of the exuberance of the *années folles* as expressed by the Les Six, this piece is in continuity with the *belle époque*, nourished by classicism. Evoking the slow movement of this quintet, the music critic Claude Rostand wrote: “Of all the works composed by Reynaldo Hahn, this is the one I would choose if there [were] to be only one.”

In 1870, Paul Verlaine wrote a cycle of twenty-one poems for his bride Mathilde Mauté de Fleurville. Fauré chose nine of these poems, altering their order for the sake of dramatic and musical architecture, for his most ardently passionate song cycle, *La Bonne chanson*. This is his most extroverted and impetuous work, which probably accounts for its relative popularity. It is said that Fauré transferred into *La Bonne chanson* all the passionate love he then felt for Emma Bardac, Debussy’s future second wife. The composition of the cycle lasted from August 1892 until February 1894, when only

eight of its nine movements were deemed ready for performance by the composer. The first performance took place on April 25, 1894, in the drawing-room of Madame Lemaire, with baritone Maurice Bagés singing and Fauré at the piano. *L'hiver a cessé* (no. 9) did not reach the publisher until September of that year. The first public and complete performance was almost one year later, in April 1895, on which occasion Fauré was again the pianist and the baritone was Jeanne Remacle. Audiences and critics alike were baffled by the novelty of the musical idiom, and Marcel Proust was one of the very few immediate admirers, whereas Saint-Saëns thought his friend Fauré “had gone completely mad.”

Notes on Tailleferre by Jean-Yves Bras (translated by Roger Greaves) and Wikipedia.org. Used by permission. All other notes provided by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Tapestry

Faces of a Woman

Music by De Dia, McAllister, Szymko, and von Bingen

In honor of Women's History Month

March 19, 2008

Wednesday afternoon, 12:10 pm

West Building Lecture Hall



Harvard Glee Club

New and Old Glee Club Favorites

March 23, 2008

Sunday afternoon, 4:00 pm

East Building Large Auditorium

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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